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Translator's Note:

1. 1 liang (两)= 50g

Prologue

Zhang Ping has always considered himself some kind of a genius. What

kind of genius? A genius in the martial arts department of course!

When he was only six months old, he could kick away all the things around him off the bed, most of them being his eldest brother, second brother and older sister. When he was only one year old, he could already beat up everyone around him. Everytime his father tried to hold him, he would have to restrain his two little hands so he won't get hit, but no matter, he still has his two legs.

When he was two, he accidentally drowned their egg-laying hen inside a water jar while trying to practice 'breaking the water jar to save the chicken'. Other people use stone, but he used their family's rolling pin to act as a sword to hack the water jar. When he successfully made a hole in the jar, the sound was too loud and woke up his sister's child. His sister came out to a dead hen and tried to salvage the water jar. From that time onwards, their family's water jar has a hole in them.

When he was three, he was playing around their courtyard with their family's wolfhound, Da Wang. Somehow afterwards, Da Wang got upset and almost bite his little birdie off. He was frightened and punched Da Wang right in the nose. From then onwards, Da Wang will run off far everytime he sees him.

When he was five, he was already able to climb up a room and lift it's tiles. Even though he originally intended to help his father and brothers fix the roof, his eldest brother kicked him off.

At six years old, he did something heroic. He knocked down human trafficker who tried abduct him. He ran back home with two other abducted

children. Even the magistrate was informed of that incident, he visited their family home, patted his head and claimed this child has a lot of potential.

All of that was told by his parents because he could barely remember things that happens before he was seven. Other children will have difficulties remembering incidents that happened before they were twelve, but not him. He is a genius after all, and geniuses must have good memories.

When he was seven, he punched a kid named Er Niu who was older than him by three years in the face. His nose bled and he ran home crying to tattle to his mom. His mom went to their house to settle the score and in the end, Zhang Ping was beaten in the butt by his mother who told him that he violated a rule in the martial world.

It was the sentence 'violation of a martial law' that made him realized that he was different than other children. He was actually a martial arts master. Since then, he rarely acts on the kids in the village, not counting him helping his younger brother. He focused his time on learning martial arts instead, but soon, the martial arts skill that their family pass down from generations gradually becomes not enough for him. After that, he found something wrapped in blue cloth underneath his father's cloth box. It was an old martial arts' secret manual. Zhang Ping, a martial art enthusiast opened a few pages and was convinced that was a masterpiece. But the problem was the book wasn't complete, more than half the pages was gone. No wonder his father merely store it away.

But who was Zhang Ping? He was a martial arts genius. It doesn't matter that he self-study, his passion for martial art exceeds anyone. So he decided to come up with the missing parts of the book. Just as he was about to do that, something big happened to his family.

The Zhang Family could be considered well off in the Fang Ding village, even though they have quite a number of children. Other than older sister who marries early and second brother who lived elsewhere after marriage, the entire family lives together. Including eldest brother who has two children after marriage as well as their grandparents. They have twelve mouths to feed in total.

He is the third son, fifteen years old and he has another younger brother, the fourth son who is twelve. The other younger brothers are even younger, one is eight years old and the other, only two. Even though their family is big, his mother is not the petty kind. His sister in law is very hardworking too. As for his grandmother, even though she has a slight temper, it cannot surpass his mother's constantly smiling face. Even though four generations lives together in the same house the atmosphere is amiable and joyful.

But even the most capable people cannot escape from calamity. Two years long of drought; the self-sufficient little village was turn upside down. His eldest sister who is already married did not want to burden them, but their second brother and his entire family had to depend on them, so just like that, two years passed without any progress.

Even though their family has a lot of men, the ones old enough to make a living outside are very few. At that very moment, his sister-in-law's stomach got bigger, so his parents are worried.

Seeing the sister-in-law so hungry she can't walk, his father grits his teeth and suddenly announces his plan to sell one of his children.

Zhang Ping knew his family had been hitting a rough patch, but he didn't know it is to that extent. He asks him which child he was planning to sell. His father look at them one by one, eyes watering.

No matter how the father look at it, he can't bear to let it be the little ones. How about the Fourth? No, the Fourth was smart and clever. In the coming days, he will be able to help the family greatly.

And then he look at the one in front of him. No, that kid is the only one other than the eldest who can already work for the family. He is also understanding and loving, how can he bear to sell him.

Zhang Ping look left and right and saw his father sitting by the door, they are all his flesh and blood, he cannot bear-ah.

So his eldest brother speaks out, why not sell one of his child? The sister in law did not object, her eyes red indicating that this had been discussed between them. His father is still in a dead end, his sons he could not bear, how could he bear losing his grandchildren? What should they do?

Just as his father was about delve into plundering and crime, some people comes into their village asking them if any are willing to enter the palace to be servants. Anyone from the age eight to eighteen will do, as long as they cannot read and are healthy. If they are accepted, they will receive settlement worth 40 *liang* of silver. When asked what they will be doing in the palace, they said they will be eunuchs. Many who originally intended to sell their children walks away.

Zhang Pin scratches his head. It's not a big deal, he just has to cut his little bird, just think of it as it was bitten off by Da Wang years back. Besides, there are many men in the Zhang Family, one becoming a eunuch will not affect their family line. Being a eunuch is nothing!

More importantly, they will be given 40 *liang* of silver. 40 *liang*! That is a large amount of money. Besides, he heard if you do things in the palace, you will be rewarded with money. If he does well, it will not be considered a disgrace to his ancestors. He will also get food, and he might even be able to support his family.

The more he thinks about it, the more inviting the idea seems. Zhang Ping runs to register his name. The comprador calls for the village chief and ask about his family's situation and his personality.

The village chief knew Zhang Ping, his lips trembles as he says, "This kid is a nice kid. He respects elders and love the young ones. He is willing to endure things and have high tolerance. Just he can occasionally blanks out at times and does not think things through."

When the comprador hears that, he thinks Zhang Ping can be a really good eunuch. He size him up and said, "Here is 20 *liang*. If you agree, sign here."

The comprador is not afraid he would change his mind, this village is so far and poor. If you don't want to send your children into the palace, other people will. Moreover those children will be working inside the palace. They will have specialists to castrate them, they won't have to pay other people to.

Zhang Ping asks how much monthly salary a regular eunuch will be getting in the palace. He answered, two *liang* worth of silver monthly and 1 *hu* of rice. Their yearly income can be considered higher than normal 9th level officials. But what he did not tell Zhang Pin was regular eunuch's salary will mostly be used to bribe their superior. Don't even dream of saving money the first two and three years.

Since Zhang Ping did not know then, he thought it was a good way to live. There are food and place to live and he did not want his father to go through with his plan. In the end, he dip his thumb in the red ink and leaves his thumbprint.

The village chief did not get to inform his parents as he watch the child left his thumbprint.

What does the kid think eunuchs do? How can this child be so foolish?

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